

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 04285 181520Z
ACTION NEA-07

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INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 4285

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IS, SA
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH EZER WEIZMAN: THE SAUDI ROLE

REF: TEL AVIV 4404

1. WE WERE STRUCK BY WEIZMAN'S COMMENTS TO AMB LEWIS REPORTED
IN THE LAST PARAGRAPH OF REFTEL TO THE EFFECT THAT SYRIA AND
EGYPT CAN NEGOTIATE PARTIAL SETTLEMENTS: "THEY CAN DO IT,
AND KEEP THE PLO UNDER CONTROL, IF THE SAUDIS INSIST. THE
SAUDIS ARE THE KEY." WE ARE NOT SURE EXACTLY WHAT WEIZMAN
HAS IN MIND, BUT IT APPEARS TO REFLECT AN IMPORTANT MISUNDER-
STANDING OF THE SAUDI POSITION AND ROLE.

2. THE SAUDIS HAVE NEVER BEEN INTERESTED IN PARTIAL SOLUTIONS
FOR THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE. THEY HAVE CONSISTENTLY URGED
A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. AFTER THE 1973 WAR KING FAISAL,
WITH MANY MISGIVINGS, INDICATED THAT SAUDI ARABIA WOULD NOT
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PAGE 02 JIDDA 04285 181520Z

OBJECT TO THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO A FINAL SETTLEMENT
SO LONG AS THERE WAS CONTINUING PROGRESS AND THE PROCESS
WAS ACCEPTABLE TO THE CONFRONTATION STATES. THIS VERY LIKE
WARM ENDORSEMENT OF PARTIAL AGREEMENTS (WHICH THE SAUDIS LIKED
TO THINK OF AS GETTING THE COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT BY STAGES)

ENDED WITH SINAI II WHICH THE SAUDIS CAME TO REGARD AS LITTLE

LESS THAN DISASTROUS. THE TERMS OF THAT AGREEMENT WHEN THEY FINALLY EMERGED WERE BAD ENOUGH BUT WHAT WAS PARTICULARLY PAINFUL FOR THE SAUDIS WAS THE RIFT IT CAUSED BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA WHICH WAS BARELY PATCHED UP AT THE RIYADH SUMMIT AFTER A YEAR OF UNPRECEDENTEDLY INTENSIVE SAUDI DIPLOMATIC EFFORT.

3. IN SHORT, THE SAUDIS FEEL THEIR ORIGINAL JUDGEMENT THAT PARTIAL AGREEMENTS ARE NO GOOD HAS BEEN VINDICATED. IF BOTH SYRIA AND EGYPT WANT AGAIN TO BEGIN NEGOTIATING PARTIAL AGREEMENTS, THE SAUDIS MIGHT NOT ACTIVELY OBJECT. WE CAN CONCEIVE OF NO SITUATION, HOWEVER, IN WHICH THE SAG COULD BE INDUCED TO USE ITS LEVERAGE ON SYRIA AND EGYPT TO BRING THEM AGAINST THEIR WILL TO NEGOTIATE PARTIAL AGREEMENTS.

4. WEIZMAN MAY ALSO BE OVERESTIMATING THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SAG CAN INFLUENCE EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN ACTIONS, BUT THAT IS ANOTHER MATTER.
HORAN

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